

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 9683

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, TU

SUBJ: REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY NATIONAL CONVENTION

REF: A. IZMIR 361; B. ADANA 333; C. ISTANBUL 3280

1. INDICATIONS ARE THAT REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) NATIONAL CONVENTION DECEMBER 14-16 WILL PRODUCE STRONG RE-AFFIRMATION OF SUPPORT FOR BLUENT ECEVIT'S LEADERSHIP AND WILL NOT LEAD TO MAJOR CHANGES IN PARTY'S ORIENTATION.

2. PARTY'S INTERNAL RIVALRY IS CURRENTLY FOCUSSED PRIMARILY ON MOST OF SECRETARY GENERAL. INCUMBENT ORHAN EYUBOGLU IS BEING CHALLENGED PRINCIPALLY BY FACTION LED BY FORMER SECGEN KAMIL KIRIKOGLU AND REGARDED AS MORE RADICAL THAN REST OF PARTY. HOWEVER, KIRIKOGLU FACTION SO FAR HAS NOT ANNOUNCED SUPPORT FOR ANY CANDIDATE TO REPLACE EYUBOGLU. (NAMES OF FORMER MINISTERS TURAN GUNES, DENIZ BAYKAL, MUSTAFA USTUNDAG, ONDER SAV, AND ALI TOPUZ, HAVE ALL BEEN MENTIONED IN PRESS AS POTENTIAL SECGEN CANDIDATES.) RESULTS OF PRIVINCILA CONVENTIONS REPORTEDLY INDICATE LITTLE CHANCE OF
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SUCCESS FOR KIRIKOGLU CHALLENGE OF EYUBOLGU.

3. DURING CONVENTION, THIS RIVALRY IS LIKELY TO EMERGE IN CONNECTION WITH TWO MATTERS: (1) ELECTION OF NEW PARTY ASSEMBLY, WHICH LATER WILL ELECT SECGEN; (2) DISCUSSION OF WHAT IS MEANT BY "DEMOCRATIC LEFT", A TERM ADOPTED BY PARTY'S EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS LAST JUNE AS CHARACTERIZATION OF RPP'S IDEOLOGICAL POSITION.

4. LIKE ALL OTHER TURKISH PARTIES, RPP IS CONTINUALLY BESET BY INTERNAL RIVALRIES. HOWEVER, GROWTH OF ECEVIT'S POPULARITY SINCE CYPRUS LANDING SEEMS HAVE GREATLY STRENGTHENED PARTY UNITY. PARTY DISCIPLINE IN PARLIAMENT HAS BEEN DEPENDABLE, AND FACTIONALISM APPEARS BE MUCH LESS TROUBLESOME THAN ONE YEAR AGO.

5. AS REQORTE SEPARATELY, ONCE CONVENTION IS CONCLUDED AND RPP LEADERSHIP IS NOT LONGER OCCUPIED WITH PARTY'S INTERNAL PROBLEMS, TIME MAY BE PROPITIOUS FOR FRESH EFFORT AT RESOVLING GOVERNMENT CRISIS.

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